



Hiring Process Feedback

To: Superintendent
From: Chief Operating Officer
Date: January 12, 2023
Re: Motion Response: Hiring Process Feedback (further response)

[By Stacy Thompson]: Request for the current methodology for retrieving incremental and ongoing knowledge/feedback regarding employment satisfaction or suggestions from all district employees, to be used as a strategic tool for this committee to consider potential trainings, supports and to share with HR to utilize with their hiring process.

Amendment: Ms. Doherty made a friendly amendment with no objection from the maker of the motion to include quarterly reports on the types of complaints and nature of the investigations without employee names and any lawsuits, claim letters and MCAD filings.

I am only aware of one MCAD complaint and the Solicitor's office is handling that matter. The Solicitor's office likely has other "claim letters" and "lawsuits" related to Lowell Public Schools. The School Department has requested that report. I hope that information, consistent with what is provided the City Council, will be provided.

In regard to matters where I am the counsel, I am aware of only one case in Superior Court where the School Committee is the Plaintiff. There was also a suit in Superior Court where the Plaintiff sought an injunction to prevent Lowell Public School's providers from visiting a home, but the Court dismissed that Complaint in response to our motion. There are also grievances at various levels of the grievance process.

We have at least monthly meetings with LSAA, the UTL, and SEIU. The leaders of these unions represent the workforce in addressing concerns that members may have. In our EDC meetings, we typically discuss and/or provide information in regard to questions or concerns of the UTL on a monthly basis. There is also a meeting every 1-2 weeks with LSAA and at least monthly meetings with SEIU. Additionally, we speak with the representatives or counsel of these unions on a more regular basis to address questions or concerns. It would be appropriate for an employee to speak to their union about filing a grievance or otherwise request that a hiring concern be addressed. The Office of Equity & Engagement also is available to receive employee reports and concerns.

We previously reported that Human Resources was offering exit surveys to employees to collect feedback. Exit interviews are also available. Feedback has been collected in both SY 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. About 30% of personnel are providing feedback. The data is collected from retirees, resignations, and for school-to-school transfers. The questionnaire includes whether employees would consider returning to this school district in the future. The overwhelming majority of respondents stated that they would return to work in Lowell Public Schools with many noting they would like to return as substitute teachers or as part-time tutors. Most also stated that they would tell friends that Lowell Public Schools is a good place to work with many noting that they had a wonderful career in Lowell. Exiting employees also stated that their leave or resignation was caused by personal reasons, salary dissatisfaction, or length of commute.

Answers to all exiting questions varied across the district. I understand that these responses may not be statistically valid for many purposes, but exit data has provided feedback that the district can use to enhance employment opportunities and improve the working environment for current and future staff. Exit interviews will continue to be conducted by HR and responses will be housed in the personnel office for record keeping. The department intends to continue using such information and other data to improve our staff's work experience. When the compendium is release to all staff members, I will also include an opportunity for all staff to provide feedback.